

Atlanta Report for weekly

The African American Advisory Council (AAAC) had eleven members and both co-chairs presence during the August 26-31, 2002, Blacks In Government National Training Conference (BIG NTC). AAAC members John Edmond, Gerald Tillman, and Toni Hawkins provided leadership in staffing the AAAC/OHRM booth. Malinda Johnson was on hand to provide information on the new Mentoring Program. Marcia Sneed provided tremendous assistance with the USDA Atlanta staffers who came daily to assist in coverage for the Forest Service and the OHRM/AAAC booths. USDA had a total of four exhibit booths at BIG. Also, technical assistance from Pamela Steed and Laretta Miles was outstanding. Please go to BIGNet.org for viewing of the Monday 9 AM opening BIG NTC session where AAAC Co-chair Don Arnette was introduced to the over 6,000 delegation in attendance and the international network that received the broadcast via satellite. The team of Civil Rights led by Carol Fields and Jack Nelson did a great job on the Tuesday full-day session for USDA where the AAAC Co-chair Dwight Holman gave a presentation on the work of the African American Advisory Council.

Major events of the BIG NTC led by First Vice President Gregg Reeves were the Special Enhancement Presentations (SEP): Shirley Harrington-Watson, AAAC Program Manager gave opening comments on the Wednesday 8-11 AM SEP on Leadership Initiatives, and Dr. Velma Charles Shannon, Environmental Justice Manager gave a most informative talk during the Thursday 8-11AM Homeland Security SEP. To top this action packed week of workshops and training sessions given by BIG, the USDA AAAC members held listening sessions at two of the Atlanta USDA offices on Tuesday from 2:30-4 PM and Thursday from 2-4 PM. These well attended sessions informed field USDA staff about the AAAC and received their input for planning purposes of AAAC's work. Evening listening sessions hosted by the AAAC were also held during the week starting Sunday August 25th from 5-7 PM and each ran over more than an hour on three nights. A complete report of these sessions will be shared in the next AAAC meeting.